



**Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks**

2300 Lake Elmo Drive  
Billings, MT 59105

## **NOTICE OF DECISION**

March 17, 2006

TO: Environmental Quality Council  
Director's Office, Dept. of Environmental Quality  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks\*

Director's Office	Lands Section
Parks Division	Design & Construction
Fisheries Division	Legal Unit
Wildlife Division	Regional Supervisors

Mike Volesky, Governor's Office \*  
Sarah Elliott, Press Agent, Governor's Office\*  
Montana Historical Society, State Preservation Office  
Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council  
Montana Wildlife Federation  
Montana State Library\*  
George Ochenski  
Montana Environmental Information Center  
Wayne Hirst, Montana State Parks Foundation  
FWP Commissioner Shane Colton\*  
Montana Parks Association (land acquisition projects)  
Bob Raney  
Sharon Moore, DNRC Area Manager, Southern Land Office  
County Commissioners  
Other Local Interested People or Groups  
\* (Sent electronically)

Ladies and Gentlemen:

A Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared for renovation of the Indian Fort FAS boat ramp near Reed Point, Montana. A notice of the draft EA was published in the Billings Gazette and Helena Independent Record providing a 30-day public comment period. No comments were received.

The boat ramp at Indian Fort has been unusable since the 1990's, as the river undercut the bank below the concrete ramp during high flows, causing it to buckle. Without a useable ramp at Indian Fort FAS, a boater launching upstream at Pelican FAS must travel 32 river miles downstream to Itch-Ke-Pe FAS to take out. Because of this failure, boaters with trailered boats have either avoided using Indian Fort FAS or used pioneered hand-launch sites on adjacent land not owned by FWP. Montana FWP would like to restore motorized boat access to the Yellowstone River at Indian Fort and proposes to remove and replace the existing unusable boat ramp.

Indian Fort FAS is an important point of access for the public to the Yellowstone River. The lack of a usable boat ramp at this FAS has forced the public to concentrate use at other FAS' in the area and to pioneer boat launches on adjacent DNRC property.

This EA did not reveal any significant negative impacts to the physical and human environment and any minor impacts can be mitigated. No threatened or endangered species have been located in the area, and no unique or physical features would be affected.

The department has decided to proceed with Alternative C as described in the Environmental Assessment. This will remove and replace the existing boat ramp in the same location. The existing concrete abutment will be removed and the grade will be lowered between the parking area elevation and the river by cutting down the bank. This will necessitate moving the cattle guard and associated fencing substantially back into the parking area. The proposed renovations and improvements have been designed to follow Best Management Practices (BMP's). Montana FWP engineering staff will oversee the completion of the project to ensure that construction meets state specifications, such as limiting soil and vegetation disturbance to the immediate project area, limiting changes in surface water runoff or drainage patterns once the project is completed, and seeding disturbed areas to aid in reclamation.

FWP will continue to work with the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation in regards to obtaining an easement or other management agreement on the adjacent school trust property. It is not part of this action and will require a separate Environmental Assessment; public notice and comment period if a management agreement between the two agencies is proposed.

If you have questions regarding this decision notice, please contact me at 247-2951.

Sincerely,

Gary Hammond  
Region Five Supervisor  
Billings, Montana